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ABSTRACT

This digest discusses five major issues and trends that significantly affect career planning professionals: (1) changing demographics; (2) the increasing role of computers in career planning; (3) a new orientation to international employment; (4) video tape technology; and (5) an increased emphasis on marketing. (NB)

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HIGHLIGHTS ...An ERIC/CAPS Digest

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Issues and Trends in Career Planning and Placement

Global marketplace, corporate downsizing, leveraged buy-outs, demographic shifts, environmental scanning -- these are key terms for the modern day career planning and placement professional who must be in touch with them in order to effectively serve student and employer constituents.

Heading into the 1990s and beyond, the career planning profession faces several major issues and trends. Our nation's population is shifting and our economy has a decidedly global orientation. Computer technology is playing an increasingly pervasive role in career counseling. Career planning professionals are being asked to interpret employment trends, articulate the value of institutional education programs to student and employer audiences, and meet changing customer needs as never before. A discussion of five major issues and trends that are significantly affecting career planning professionals follows.

Changing Demographics

Key trends in our changing demographic picture that will involve career planning professionals include:

- A significantly smaller number of 18- to 24-year-old students than in years past.
- A growth of some racial minorities into majorities in many sections of the country. It is estimated that by the year 2000, our population will include 47 million Hispanics, 44 million Blacks, and 6 million Asian Americans. It has also been estimated that whites will be in the minority in 23 of 25 of the largest U.S. metropolitan areas.
- More than half of all jobs will be held by women.
- Significant numbers of people will be working part-time (Kauffman, 1988).

These demographic shifts will predictably bring with them significant changes in the needs of the employer and student constituents career planning professionals serve. The career planning professional will have to do more than merely extend traditional services to these clients; he/she will need to develop new services to meet their unique needs. Offering placement information in Spanish or Japanese and requiring career counselors to be bilingual cannot be far off.

The Increasing Role of Computers in Career Planning

While computers have been a part of the landscape of the collegiate career planning scene for many years, primarily in computerized guidance packages, the role that computer technology is playing has grown far beyond this narrow application. The need for a computer on every counselor's desk is clearly the order of the day.

Computer Networking. The advent of a personal computer and a modem allow career planning professionals to tap into employment opportunities for their students from around the nation. A firm based in Seattle, Washington has created a system named JOBLINK which enables employers to centralize their job information for college career offices. Employers can post job opportunities and company profiles which can be accessed through a personal computer and a modem (Sinnott, 1988).

The Federal Government's Office of Personnel Management has established a computer bulletin board listing job opportunities with the Federal Government. With a personal computer and a modem any career planning professional can access the system, download the information, and generate a comprehensive print-out of all available employment opportunities.

Career planning professionals in the cooperative education area have developed a similar national network, the system titled Cooperative Education Communications Network (CECONET), which already links hundreds of colleges and universities and employers for the common purpose of computer networking.

Database Applications. Colleges and universities across the country are using databases for the listing, storage, and retrieval of career information. Whether on a mainframe, mini-, or micro-computer, colleges are turning to database software systems to store and automate every aspect of their career planning operations. Student registration, employer job listings, scheduling campus interviews between students and employment recruiters, referral of student resumes to employers, credential files, and mailing list information for almost any purpose are all common database applications.

Desktop Publishing. Another major revolution computers have brought to career planning is the near typeset quality of documents that can be produced with a computer, a laser printer, and a desktop publishing software package. Career centers are now designing their own brochures, forms, stationary, and publications such as job vacancy bulletins, job hunting guides, and employment preparation handouts. Written communications of all sorts are being transformed through the use of this new technology (DeLoughry, 1987).

Desktop publishing technology has significantly affected the career planning profession due to the high quality of resumes that can be produced. Now for a fraction of the

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cost and with a speed and flexibility never before available, students can prepare a resume that appears to be professionally typeset (Antonoff, 1986).

A New Orientation to International Employment

Experienced leaders in the career planning field are recognizing the impact that our global economy is having on collegiate employment programs. In a recent article John Shingleton, former Director of Placement Services at Michigan State University states:

> *In the world of employment, we are now dealing on a global basis rather than simply just a national basis. In order to meet the needs of the future, in terms of employment of college graduates, we've got to design a program that can speak to those needs* (Shingleton, 1987).

The international status of our economy requires that career planning professionals expand their counseling orientation beyond regional, state, and national boundaries. In 1987 and 1988 a career fair, organized by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry of Japan and Boston University, brought together Japanese and American firms operating in Japan with graduating college students from around the United States. The career fair drew students with Japanese language skills from colleges and universities all over the United States. These students had employment interviews with up to eighty companies. This is just one example of international career planning and placement programs that are beginning to evolve (Oishi, 1988).

Internationalism is a trend gaining momentum and must be taken seriously by career planning professionals. The world economy has touched the career planning profession. Today it is imperative that career planning professionals stay current with trends in international employment (Kauffman, 1988).

Video Tape Technology

Most colleges offer some form of videotaped "mock interview program" to assist students in refining their interviewing skills. However, the uses of video technology have grown far beyond this application. Most career planning centers now have a comprehensive videotape library. Libraries contain tapes on employer organizations to assist students in preparing for employment interviews, self-help tapes on job search strategy, resume and cover-letter writing, and interviewing techniques. Most students, having grown up with the television, are accustomed to acquiring new information through the televisio. Career planning professionals must be comfortable and well versed in the use of video equipment in order to design effective career planning programs.

Increased Emphasis on Marketing

Because we study, live, and work in a world where marketing is all around us, career planning professionals must possess the ability to effectively communicate how their services are of value to their users. Because the public is so accustomed to receiving promotional messages, they adopt the view that a service that is not promoted is probably not available. The consequences of ignoring this "marketing imperative" can mean the decline of a program (Walz, 1988).

Marketing can be an effective method to stay in touch with the changing needs of students and employers and allow career planning professionals to design and offer programs and services that meet user needs. This is specially significant in light of the nation's changing demographic picture, and our evolving national economic outlook. Mergers, down-sizing, and economic shifts are causing employers to reassess their human resources needs on a regular basis. A comprehensive view of marketing can allow career planning professionals to remain in touch with the changing needs of the employers and students they serve (Kotler & Fox ,1986).

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